1 December 2016

At the Cabinet Secretary’s evidence session 25th October, it was agreed that officials would provide a written update on the apparatus in place to support progress in cutting emissions in the public sector and mandatory reporting, following changes to the Public Sector Climate Leaders Forum. Please see attached.

Regards,

Catriona Jeorrett
PUBLIC SECTOR CLIMATE ACTION – CHANGES TO SUPPORT APPARATUS

Introduction

The principal legislative mechanism to support progress in cutting emissions from the public sector and drive public sector climate action is the requirement, under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, for public bodies to report on their compliance with the Public Bodies Duties. The Scottish Government has in place a range of operational, strategic and practical mechanisms to support this.

Background

The Public Sector Climate Leaders Forum was established in October 2013 to provide strategic oversight of climate change action across the sector. The Forum led strategic work to introduce mandatory reporting by public bodies on their compliance with the Public Bodies Duties in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Secondary legislation to require reporting came into force in November 2015 and the first mandatory reports are due on 30th November 2016.

Following the completion of this work, which established the framework for reporting climate action, the role of PSCLF was reviewed in late 2015.

In line with both the Scottish Government’s on-going efforts to streamline the number of strategic working groups it operates to improve outcomes and seek efficiencies, and the desire to place climate change more squarely at the heart of public leadership in Scotland, a decision was taken to discontinue PSCLF and mainstream climate change action.

Strategic Leadership

This change to the strategic leadership of public sector climate action was designed to spread responsibility beyond the ‘usual suspects’ who made up PSCLF, and for whom climate change tended to be the ‘day job’, to a broader range of public sector stakeholders across Scotland.

Responsibility for strategic leadership now sits with the Scottish Leaders Forum (SLF), a network of leaders at the heart of public services in Scotland. SLF meet regularly to discuss and collaborate on delivery of high priority issues facing Scotland. One of the strands for collaborative working under discussion is climate change and officials leading this work have indicated they would be happy to update the Committee as those discussions progress.

Opportunities to work with other specific leadership networks, including the Chief Executives’ Forum and the Scottish Government Delivery Bodies Group, which bring together leaders of Government Agencies and Non-ministerial departments, and NDPBs respectively, are also being explored.

Operational support

Alongside this strategic leadership the Scottish Government funds the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) to provide operational support for the public bodies reporting process. SSN acts as a single point of contact for all public bodies on reporting, provide training and support to bodies completing their reports, coordinate returns and analyse the data.
SSN supported a trial reporting exercise last year as a ‘dummy run’ for this year’s statutory exercise, which saw 112 public bodies submit 110 reports (from a possible maximum of 150). Further information on the trial year, including the analysis report is provided here. SSN will carry out similar analysis of the 15/16 reports, which will be available in 2017.

SSN’s other activities include an annual conference, attended this year by nearly 200 delegates from across the public sector. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to dissemination information on climate change delivery and best practice, including on reporting.

**Delivery Support**

On a practical delivery level public sector climate action in Scotland is further supported, through a number of specific programmes to accelerate the delivery of energy efficiency and low carbon infrastructure.

In 2014/15 the Scottish Government provided £1 million to support the initial roll out of Scotland Energy Efficient Street Lighting programme and through the Scottish Futures Trust have developed a Street Lighting Toolkit to support local delivery. Scottish Government also provided the Scottish Futures Trust with a dedicated low carbon budget to facilitate a work stream allowing specialist financial and legal support for public sector bodies on low carbon projects.

Investing in the development of a Non Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework that is attractive to both the public sector and private sector will maximise the economies of scale and standardised approach, offering both better solutions and better value for money from energy efficiency activities. The Scottish Government will put in place a dedicated project support unit that public sector organisations can access to help with the development of their estate wide energy efficiency projects. Public sector bodies will be offered up to £50,000 of support for each estate wide energy efficiency project.

Over the last 12 months through Resource Efficient Scotland and the Stratego Project the Scottish Government has provided support to local authorities to start developing low carbon heat plans for their area.

Since 2012 the Scottish Government has provided almost £20 million of capital to Salix finance for the provision of interest free loans to the public sector for energy efficiency activities and secured an additional £10 million as part of the Capital Stimulus programme in September 2016 to accelerate the delivery of planned public sector energy efficiency activity.

To collate energy efficiency work across Scotland the Scottish Government announced the development of the Scottish Energy Efficiency Programme in 2015. From 2018 this will deliver an integrated framework for the delivery of energy efficiency across all building types in Scotland. As part of the development work for SEEP, 11 Local Authorities were offered pilot funding of £9 million to run specific innovative energy efficiency activities in their local authority area.

Over time the on-going reporting work of the public sector will become more aligned with the implementation of the Climate Change Plan.

CJ
Climate Change Hub
November 2016

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.gov.scot